

CLAIMS

1 (once amended). A rigid animal tether assembly comprising:

a) a rigid outwardly extending tie section and an inwardly extending rigid, hollow tilt section having an open inner end, said tie section including means for tethering an animal at a distal end section thereof and being connected at an opposing coupling end section thereof to an open outer end of said tilt section; and

b) base surface means for contiguously mating with said open inner end of the rigid, hollow tilt section;

c) said coupling end section of the rigid tie section including means for connecting biasing means to said opposing coupling end section inside said hollow tilt section for continuously drawing the rigid tie section and rigid, hollow tilt section under tension in a direction toward said base surface means;

d) said biasing means being disposed within said rigid, hollow tilt section for continuously urging said base surface means against said open inner end of the tilt section with an amount of force sufficient to project the rigid tie section coupled to the outer end of the tilt section in a direction outwardly from said base surface means, said biasing means being further effective to allow the tilt section to tilt in response to movement of a tethered animal.

2 (once amended). A tether assembly as defined in claim 1, wherein

said base surface means includes means for tiltably uniting the inner end of the hollow tilt section to the base surface means to enable the tie section to tilt together with the tilt section with respect to the base surface means when an animal is tethered to said distal end section of the tie

section.

3 (once amended). A tether assembly as defined in claim 2, wherein

said base surface means includes alignment means for registering the hollow tilt section with respect to the base surface means to surround the biasing means.

4 (once amended). A tether assembly as defined in claim 3, wherein

said alignment means includes means juxtaposed the inner end of the hollow tilt section for positioning the inner open end of the tilt section with respect to the base surface means and the biasing means,

said hollow tilt section being effective to tiltably move with respect to the base surface means.

5 (once amended). A tether assembly as defined in claim 4, wherein

said means juxtaposed the inner end of the hollow tilt section includes a removably mounted cap member having a hub portion directed inwardly into the open inner end of the tilt section with a flange contiguously disposed on the base surface means around said hub portion against which the open inner end of the tilt section is tiltably seated.

6 (once amended). A tether assembly as defined in claim 1, wherein

said distal end section of the tie section includes a resilient end cap member and a movably mounted ring for releasably attaching an animal tether lead.

7 (once amended). A tether assembly as defined in claim 1, wherein

said coupling end section of the tie section includes a plug member for frictionally fitting the open outer end of the tilt section to link the tie section to the tilt section.

8 (once amended). A tether assembly as defined in claim 7, wherein

said plug member includes a shoulder against which the outer end of the tilt section abuts when frictionally fitted to the plug member.

9 (once amended). A tether assembly as defined in claim 7, wherein

said plug member includes means for fastening one end of the biasing means to said tie section, and said base surface means is joined to means for linking the other end of the biasing means to the base surface means.

10 (once amended). A tether assembly as defined in claim 1, wherein

said coupling end section of the tie section includes means for fixing the open outer end of the tilt section to said coupling end section of the tie section ,

said biasing means includes a tension-loaded spring member,

said means for fixing the open outer end of the tilt section to said coupling end section includes means for fastening one end of the spring member to said tie section, and said base surface means includes means for linking the other end of the spring member to the base surface means.

11 (once amended). A tether assembly as defined in claim 10, wherein

said means for linking the other end of the spring member to the base surface means includes an elongated threaded rod for connecting said other end of the spring member to the base surface means having a threaded hole for threadingly engaging the threaded rod to adjust the amount of tension in the spring member.

12 (once amended). A tether assembly as defined in claim 10, wherein

said base surface means includes a removable cap member for registering the hollow tilt

section around the spring member, said cap member having a hub portion directed into said hollow tilt section and being effective to enable the tie section to tilt together with the tilt section with respect to the base surface means when an animal is tethered to said distal end section of the tie section .

13 (once amended). A tether assembly as defined in claim 10, wherein

said base surface means having an inwardly directed portion ~~disposed~~ for disposition within the open inner end of the tilt section,

said inwardly directed portion being effective to allow said tilt section to tilt with respect to the base surface means.

14 (once amended). A tether assembly for use with a trailer, said assembly comprising:

a) a rigid outwardly extending tie section and an inwardly extending rigid, hollow tilt section having an open inner end and an open outer end, said tie section including means for tethering an animal at a distal end section thereof and said tie section being connected at an opposing coupling end section thereof to said open outer end of said tilt section;

b) base surface means for contiguously mating with said open inner end of the rigid, hollow tilt section; and

c) assembly support means for mounting the tether assembly to said trailer, and connector means for removably attaching the base surface means to said assembly support means,

d) said assembly support means including receiver means for removably receiving said connector means;

e) said opposing coupling end section of the rigid tie section including means for

connecting an outer end of a spring member to said coupling end section inside said hollow tilt section for continuously drawing the rigid tie section under tension in a direction towards said base surface means;

f) said spring member being effective to continuously urge said base surface means against the open inner end of the hollow tilt section with an amount of force sufficient to project the rigid tie section coupled to the outer end of the tilt section in a direction outwardly from said base surface means;

g) said base surface means including means for tiltably uniting the inner end of the tilt section to the base surface means so that the tie section may tilt together with the tilt section with respect to the base surface means when an animal is tethered to said distal end section of the tie section;

h) said base surface means including alignment means for registering the hollow tilt section with respect to the base surface means to surround the spring member;

i) said spring member being connected at an inner end thereof to an elongated threaded rod for releasably connecting the spring member to said base surface means, and

j) said base surface means having a threaded hole for threadingly engaging said threaded rod means is so as to be effective to forcibly draw the tilt section against the base surface means and to adjust the amount of tension in the spring member.

15 (once amended). A tether assembly as defined in claim 14, wherein

said connector means includes cylindrical means for rotatable disposition within said receiver means to rotatably mount the base surface means to the assembly support means.

16 (twice currently amended). A tether assembly for use with a trailer, said assembly comprising:

- a) an outwardly extending tie section including means for tethering an animal at a distal end section thereof and a cylindrical connector portion at an inner end thereof;
- b) support means for mounting the tether assembly to said trailer;
- c) said support means including a cylindrical receiver portion effective to removably and rotatably receive said connector portion for removably attaching the tie section to said support means; and
- d) bushing means disposed between the connector portion and the receiver portion for allowing said connector and receiver portions to quietly and smoothly rotate with respect to each other;
- (e) said bushing means includes at least one bushing member split generally lengthwise to cylindrically expand and resiliently grasp the cylindrical connector portion that is rotatably disposed within said receiver portion.

17 (once amended). A tether assembly as defined in claim 16, wherein

said receiver portion has a first vertical length and said connector portion has a second vertical length longer than said first vertical length that forms a downwardly directed connector end section that projects below said receiver portion when the connector portion is disposed within said receiver portion,

said connector end portion includes removably mounted means for maintaining the connector portion within the receiver portion and the selective removal of the connector portion from the receiver portion.

18 (once amended). A tether assembly as defined in claim 16, wherein

said receiver portion has a first vertical length and said connector portion has a vertical length sufficient to rotate within said receiver portion when the connector portion is disposed within said receiver portion,

said assembly support means includes removably mounted means for selectively precluding rotation and removal of the connector portion from the receiver portion.

19 (cancelled). A tether assembly as defined in claim 16, wherein

said bushing means includes at least one bushing member split generally lengthwise to cylindrically expand and resiliently grasp the cylindrical connector portion that is rotatably disposed within said receiver portion.

20 (once amended). A tether assembly as defined in claim 16, wherein

said bushing means includes two bushing members each split generally lengthwise to cylindrically expand when disposed on said connector portion and resiliently grasp the connector portion at each end of the receiver portion when the connector portion is rotatably disposed within said receiver portion.